

Vol. 1, ISSUE 3. FEBRUARY 2019

SPD Nexttier

MONTHLY



Plateau: Where Peace is Murdered

By Dr. Iro Aghedo, Dr. Ndubuisi N.
Nwokolo and Patrick Okigbo III

Copyright @ 2018
Nextier SPD
All Rights Reserved.

Published since 2018 by
Nextier SPD,
5, Kikuyu Close,
Off Nairobi Street,
Wuse 2, Abuja, Nigeria.

Design and Layout
Matthew Akhabue

The board and management
of Nextier encourages you
to **please consider the
environment before printing.**

This publication has been
designed to be read on a
digital device to minimize the
**number of trees that are cut
down every year to produce
paper.**

Produced in Nigeria

CONTRIBUTORS



IRO AGHEDO, Ph.D
Consultant Associate

Iro is a specialist in Comparative Security and Strategic Studies. He is published in African Security, Review of African Political Economy, The Third World Quarterly, Black Studies, etc. He is the author of 'Boko Haram' in Professor Richard C. Martins (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Islam and the Muslim World* (2nd Edition)



NDUBUISI N. NWOKOLO, Ph.D
Senior Policy and Research Lead

Ndu is an expert in natural resources conflict and governance, security sector reform, building state capacity, etc. His most recent publication is *"Consolidating or Corrupting the Peace? Power Elite and Post-conflict Peacebuilding in the Niger Delta, Nigeria"* with Iro Aghedo (2018). Ndu is also a non-residential Research Fellow at the School of Government and Society, University of Birmingham.



PATRICK O. OKOGBO III
Founder/Principal Partner, Nextier

Patrick provides strategic leadership on a range of governance issues to Federal and State government in Nigeria. He was part of the team that developed the "Niger Delta Action Plan" with support from UNDP. He was involved in the development of "The Buhari Plan" for the stabilisation and redevelopment of the North East region of Nigeria.

EDITOR'S NOTE

PLATFORM FOR DISCUSSIONS

Welcome to the February 2019 edition of Nextier SPD Monthly publication. This magazine is designed to deepen our knowledge and insight on security, peace, and development issues in Nigeria. It brings to the fore, thematic issues such as conflict; peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, security sector reforms (SSR), disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), violent deaths, state building, environmental violence and natural resources-fuelled violent conflicts. Every month, this publication provides a step by-step analysis of security and development issues using different narratives, research philosophies, methodologies and trajectories.

The fundamental objective of this publication is to provide a platform for evidence-based and scholarly discussions of contemporary security issues facing Nigeria in particular and other African countries in general. The publication will provide evidence-driven research and proffer well thought out policy recommendations. It is our desire that policymakers, practitioners, and development partners will use the ideas presented here to engage in discussions to improve their policies, programmes, projects, and operations.

This month's Nextier SPD Monthly discusses the intractable violent conflicts in Plateau state, which lead to loss of lives and properties by the day. Relying on observation and desk research, it traces the origin, history and causes of the sectarian conflicts, identifying the conflict actors and their main grievances. Additionally, this publication examines the implication of violent conflicts on lives, properties, investments and inter-ethnic and religious relations. Subsequently, it interrogates the previous responses to the conflicts and proffered measures to reducing and ending the cycle of violence.



NDUBUISI N. NWOKOLO, Ph.D
Senior Policy Lead

Nextier SPD

February 2019

PLATEAU: WHERE PEACE IS MURDERED

Introduction

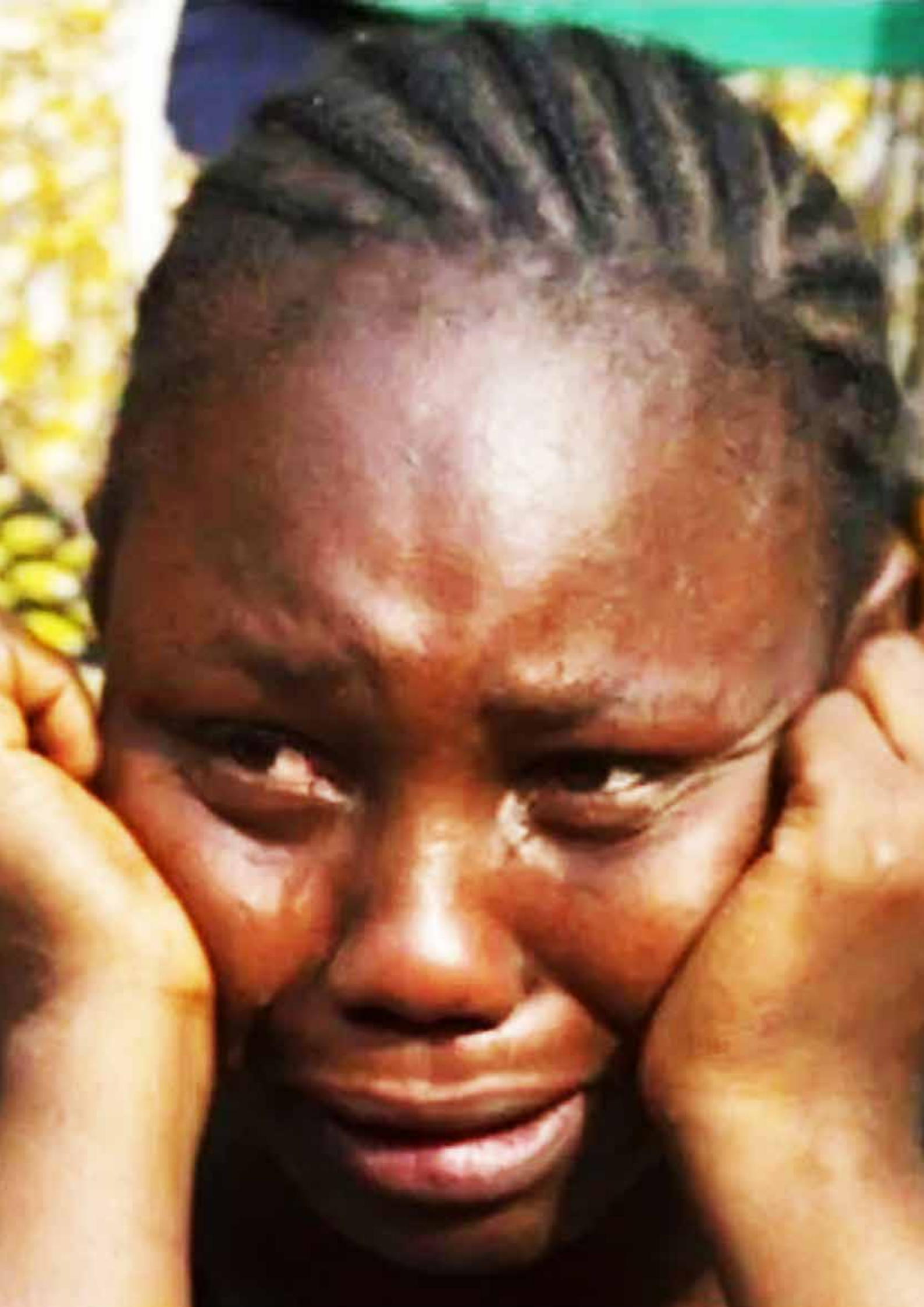
Plateau State which used to bear the appellation 'Home of Peace and Tourism' has metamorphosed into a killing field in recent years on account of sectarian violence. Jos, the capital headquarters of Plateau State, had been a magnificent city on a hill with ambient temperature. As a result, the Jos Plateau had attracted several thousands of tourists every year from within Nigeria and beyond. But the 2001 violent conflicts marked a tragic watershed in the history of the state. Though there was violence in 1994, it was soon quelled by the military government. But violent clashes between youth gangs and militias claimed over 1000 lives in Jos in September 2001 (Reno, 2004). Since this meltdown, the state has become a flashpoint of violence in Nigeria as conflicts have seemed interminable as deadly bouts of violence were recorded in 2004, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015 (Plateau State Peace Building Agency, 2018). Despite responses from the governments and other stakeholders, the scale and severity of the conflicts have been further accentuated by the infiltration of Boko Haram. For example, the Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the December 2010 Jos attacks saying in its video clip that "our creator has ordered us to wage war on everyone who does not embrace the religion of Islam

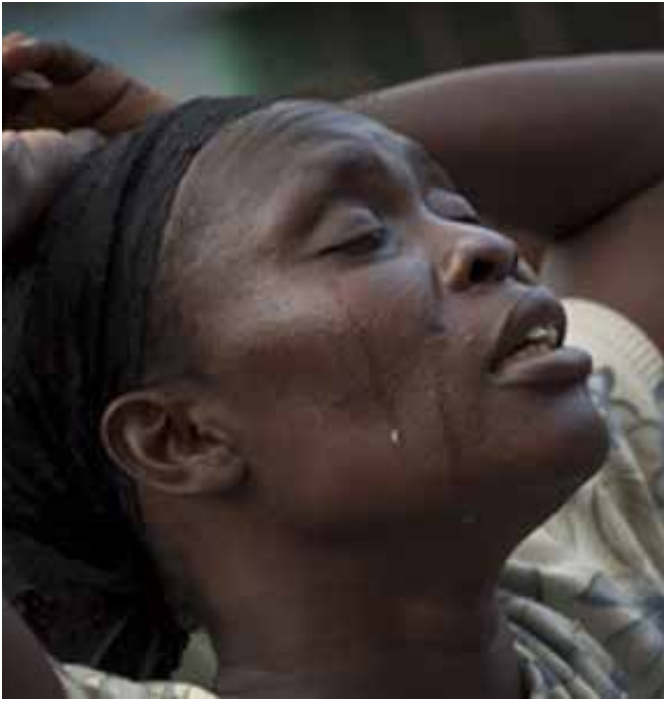
after preaching to them" (Vanguard, December 29, 2010:1). Following these developments, this edition of Nextier SPD Monthly examines the implications of endless conflicts in Plateau State and makes recommendations on how to tackle them.

History and People of Plateau State

The magnificent location of Jos has been a source of both gain and pain. Jos was founded as a tin-mining city by the British at the beginning of the twentieth century. The tin industry on the Plateau attracted several people from both Southern and Northern Nigeria to Jos for employment and commerce (Freund, 1986). Located on a pear-shaped Plateau, the region is composed of undulating hills in North-Central Nigeria. Thus, the Jos Plateau exhibits a variety of land forms and beautiful landscapes which leave it a major tourist attraction.

The 3.2 million populations of the state are composed of over 50 ethnic groups out of Nigeria's 374 groups, making the state a miniature Nigeria in terms of diversity. The local people of Berom, Anaguta, Afizare and others are widely referred to as Plateau indigenes (Madueke, 2018). The state also has large populations of Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba people who migrated to the area (referred to





as settlers) and had lived peacefully with the indigenous people throughout the tin-mining period. However, with the collapse of the mining industry in Jos and the emergence of struggle for land and other resources, the relationship between the Hausa-Fulani and the indigenous communities began to degenerate. Although there were a few skirmishes between the indigenes and settlers up to the mid-2000s especially in the Jos North Local Government Area, but they were easily curtailed by the military administrations. Such clashes revolved around entitlement claims and counter-accusations (Sayne, 2012).

Conflict Actors and Grievances

The mainly Christian indigenous populations claim that they are the rightful owners of Jos having lived in the areas for centuries. In contrast, the predominant Muslim Hausa-Fulani people (Jasawa) whose language has become the lingua franca in Jos following the Jihad of Uthman Fodio, claim that they nurtured the city into a commercial nerve (Adam, 2008). As a result, the indigenes especially the Berom and Jasawa represent two combative communities on the Jos Plateau. Interestingly, while the Berom had dominated the politics of the city, the Jasawa had dominated the economy especially since the 1970s. However, in recent years, the younger generations of the Jasawa have broadened their interests beyond the commercial spheres to the political arenas to the resistance of the indigenes. Thus, like other states in the North-Central zone such as Benue and Kaduna, conflicts in Plateau State have taken the forms of indigenes (natives) versus settlers (foreigners) and sedentary

farmers versus nomadic herders (Adisa and Adekunle, 2010).

Though the narratives of grievances of the conflict actors have been wrapped up in religious idiom, yet the political elite in Plateau State have often manipulated the conflicts for their selfish agendas. They have not only undermined the federal character principle, but have “introduced devious schemes to divide the people permanently” using the ethno-religious card (Akeredolu, 2010:68). The major trigger of the recurrent conflicts since 1999 has been political intrigues. During the 1999 local government election in the Jos North Local Government Area, the Hausa-Fulani won six wards out of the 14 electoral wards in the council. As the six wards were the highest won by an ethnic group, the Hausa-Fulani had expected to produce the chairman of the council. But the Christian ethnic groups formed a coalition and produced a Christian chairman, thus denying the Muslim Hausa-Fulani an access to the position (Krause, 2017).

The conflicts between the indigenes and the Jasawa have been further fuelled by the relegation of a single citizenship, leading to ‘us versus them’ violent struggle for power, land, pasture, water and other forms of scarce public goods. Such was the case in Yelwa in 2002 and 2004 when violence broke out between natives and settlers, leading to nearly 1000 deaths, internal displacement of about 60,000 persons, and the eventual declaration of a state of emergency in the state and removal of the governor for six months (Oota, 2016). Being the worst hit, over 2000 helpless women in Vom, Jos South LGA took to the streets in protest on January 24, 2011 over “incessant attacks on Plateau people by uniformed assailants” (Owuamanam, 2011:2).



The conflicts between the indigenes and the Jasawa have been further fuelled by the relegation of a single citizenship, leading to ‘us versus them’ violent struggle for power, land, pasture, water and other forms of scarce public goods

The conflicts have been further complicated by the ethnic character of Nigerian federation. The constitution approves the federal character principle which sets quota for each state based on indigeneity. As a result, those residing in other states outside their ancestral home are considered non-indigenous and thus discriminated against in entrance to universities, army, civil service etc. This has been heightened by the issuance of local government area of origin certificate. This crisis of citizenship on account of constitutional ambiguity has fuelled the agitation for more states and locality. Yet paradoxically each state or locality creation brings its own problems as more indigenes and settlers are thrown up.

The conflicts have been prosecuted by ethnic militias on both sides of the divide. These cannon foders are made up of unemployed youth. Though mass poverty cuts across the whole of the country, the incidence of relative poverty in the Northern Region is higher than the national average. The North is characterized by “inter-generational divide of alarming proportions” on account of massive youth unemployment, abysmal illiteracy and mass poverty (Ayoade, 2014:158). This has been compounded

by economic recession in the region. For example, the number of textile mills in Kano has declined from 350 in 1987 to only 103 today. And most of those who lost their jobs relocated to Plateau and other states (Solomon, 2017). Disgruntled politicians often see these armies of angry and hungry young persons as a resource in violence mobilization as evident in Plateau State. To

worsen the matter, flashpoints of violence in Nigeria including Plateau State have been awash with illegal lethal weapons (The Nation, October 14, 2010:17).

Implications of Violent Conflicts

Cyclical violence on the Jos Plateau has exerted a huge toll on lives, investments, mutual trust, and national image. For example, about 300 lives were lost in the 2001 violence. And reprisal attacks and other ensuing conflicts between 2001 and 2010 claimed additional over 4000 lives (Krause, 2017). The former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon described the December 2010 attack as “deplorable acts of violence especially at a time when millions of Nigerians are celebrating religious holidays” (The Guardian, December 26; 2010:1). Similarly, on July 8, 2012, Senator Gyang Dantong, Mr. Gyang Fulani (the Majority Leader of the Plateau State House of Assembly,) and over 40 other persons were killed by Fulani militias as they attended the mass burial of 63 members of their community who were murdered a day earlier by the same attackers in Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs of Plateau State (Vanguard, July 10, 2012:18).

In a violent twist, the Boko Haram terrorists claimed responsibility for the twin bomb explosions that rocked strategic locations of Jos in May 2014, killing 118 persons including seven medical students of the University of Jos (Vanguard, May 22, 2014). The Plateau State government estimated that over 7,000 lives were lost to violence in the state between 2001 and 2015 (Plateau Peace Building Agency, 2018). Without sign of abatement, estimates by Nigeria Security Tracker reveal that in 2018 alone, a total of 2,037 conflict-related deaths were recorded in the North-Central region including Plateau State. In contrast, only 1,041 of such deaths were recorded in 2017. These figures even slightly exceeded the 2,016 deaths perpetrated by Boko Haram in the North-East in the period under review (Harwood, 2018).

Besides killings, violent conflicts in Plateau State also resulted in the huge internal displacement. For example, the attacks on some communities in Langtang South LGA in June 2013 left 70 persons dead and over 7,000 displaced (Obateru, 2013). Several homes, property, communities and livelihoods were also destroyed. And thousands of people have been injured and others subjected to mental, psychological and physical traumas. Also, religious symbols have been attacked including the bombing of the Church of Christ in Nigeria in February 2012, killing 10 persons, injuring 40 others, and burning of 30 cars (Obateru and Eyoboka, 2012). Ethno-religious segregation and gentrification has become the norm as Christians and Muslims now live in separate neighbourhoods owing to mutual distrust. Even the dead are segregated as both Christians and Muslims maintain their own cemeteries. Sadly, the toll of incessant conflicts on social life has partly led to increase in the prevalence of HIV in the area from 2.6% in 2008 to 77% in 2010 (Owuamanam, 2011).

Responses to the Conflicts

Interestingly, the government and other stakeholders have



responded to the conflicts in several ways. Responses from both state and federal governments have taken two major forms, namely, deployment of security personnel immediately after violent eruption to restore law and order, and secondly, the setting up of probe panels or commission of inquiry to investigate the immediate and remote causes of violence.



Ironically, despite the operations of the STF, violent conflicts have surged in the last few years. Paradoxically, the few persons who have been arrested in connection with the violence have been set free from prosecution with the exception of the 15 persons convicted and sentenced to 10 years each in December 2010

The Special Task Force (STF) was set up. Membership of the STF which comprises security operatives from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Mobile Police and civil defence corps. Ironically, despite the operations of the STF, violent conflicts have surged in the last few years. Paradoxically, the few persons who have been arrested in connection with the violence have been set free from prosecution with the exception of the 15 persons convicted and sentenced to 10 years each in December 2010. The 15 persons were found guilty of conspiracy, illegal possession of fire arms and acts of terrorism (Businessday, December 19, 2010:4). Besides the STF, Operation Rainbow was also set up.

Also, several peace conferences, probe panels and workshops have been organized by government, traditional institutions and NGOs where members of different ethno-religious groups signed peace-agreements and shook hands. Some of the panels and commissions include: 1994: Justice

Aribiton Fiberesima Judicial Commission of inquiry into the April 1994 crisis; 2001: Justice Niki Tobi Judicial Commission of inquiry into the September 2001 crisis; 2002: Justice Okpene Judicial Commission of inquiry into communal conflicts in Benue, Nassarawa, Plateau and Taraba states in 2002; 2004: Presidential Peace Initiative Committee on Plateau State, headed



by Shehu Idris, Emir of Zazzau, May 2004; 2004: Plateau Peace Conference ('Plateau Resolves'), 18 August-21 September 2004; 2008: Federal Administrative panel of inquiry into the 2008 crisis, headed by Major General Emmanuel Abisoye; 2008: Justice Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of inquiry into the November 2008 crisis; 2010: Presidential Advisory Committee on the Jos crisis, headed by Solomon Lar. And more recently, the Plateau State Peace Building Agency (PPBA) was established by law on February 2, 2016 to prevent violence and build peace in the state. Arguably, these measures have addressed symptoms and manifestations of the violence rather than the root causes; hence the violence has remained cyclical over the years.

Ending the Cycle of Violent Conflicts

To end the wanton loss of lives and investments in Plateau State, more effective measures are needed. First, the politicization of identity markers such as ethnicity and religion has to stop. The political elite in Plateau State as in other states of the federation have often deployed ethno-religious hate speech to incite the people to violence. Former Plateau State Governor Jonah Jang indicted elite politicization of identity when he said, "every time anyone wants to fulfil their political ambition, they use religion ostensibly because of its sensitivity to launch their ambition" (Owuamanam, 2011:11). Civil-military elite who incite people to violence should be arrested and prosecuted no matter their status.

Second, corrupt security operatives should be brought to justice. Ironically, a number of police in the Plateau State Command have admitted knowing the culprits and perpetrators of violence in state. But they complained that top security officials frustrate the efforts of the rank and file in bringing culprits to justice. For example, in the January 2010 conflicts in which over 326 persons were killed, the police made 313 arrests and transferred 139 of those arrested to the Force Headquarters in Abuja on account of congestion in Jos but many of them were set free there (Onuorah and Abdulsalami, 2010: 1). Similarly, Governor Jang revealed that over 60 Chadians were arrested in connection with violence in Plateau State in 2008 – "since they took them to Abuja nothing was heard about them again" (Ezea, 2011:57).

Third, partisan security officers should not be sent to conflict zones. Many of the security officials deployed to quell the Plateau violence took sides and became involved in the production and intensification of violence leading to public protests against the military and calls for their withdrawal. Even, a general was court-martialled over his role in the escape of two detainees in 2010 (Abdulsalami, 2011:3). Such officers should be shown the way out of the armed forces.

Four, there is need for a thorough illegal arms mopping and control. The high death rate of the conflicts in Plateau confirms that the state is awash with illegal deadly weapons. These lethal weapons need to be mopped up urgently. Indeed, a member of the Solomon Lar-led Presidential Committee on the Jos crisis, Saleh Bayare, revealed that illegal weapons worth over N200 million were intercepted on their way to Jos between January and September 2010 (Agbaegbu Tobs, 2011).

“

state governors should be empowered to have appreciable control over security officials in their state. According to Jonah Jang, "since I don't control the army, police, SSS and other security agencies, it became very hard for me to succeed in taming the crisis"

Five, the call for establishment of state police should be heeded. A number of policemen posted to Plateau State to quell violence confessed that they lacked good knowledge of the terrain. This backdrop impeded their effectiveness in crime policing. This again shows the need for state police to be established so that police officers from a state will police their areas. Also, state governors should be empowered to have appreciable control over security officials in their state. According to Jonah Jang, "since I don't control the army, police, SSS and other security agencies, it became very hard for me to succeed in taming the crisis" (Owuamanam, 2011:11). At the moment, even though state governors are said to be the chief security officers of their states, they do not have control over the security men and women who are answerable to their bosses in Abuja.

Five, the crisis of dual citizenship should be addressed through a constitutional amendment. The so-called 'settlers' who have lived in a state other than their original state for up to five years should be granted the same rights and responsibilities as indigenes.

Though the violent conflicts in Plateau State have lingered on for decades, if the governments at all levels can muster the political will to implement the measures recommended in this report, the cyclical violence will drastically reduce.

References

- Abdulsalami Isa (2011), "Army Court-Martials General over Detainees' Escape in Plateau," *The Guardian*, August 17.
- Adam, H. (2008). Social Mobilization and Collective Violence: Vigilantes and Militias in the Lowlands in Plateau State, Central Nigeria. In David Pratten (ed.) *Perspectives on Vigilantism in Nigeria, Special Issue Africa* 78 (1), 107-135.
- Adisa, R. S. and Adekunle, O. A. (2010). Farmer-Herdsman Conflicts: A Factor Analysis of Socio-economic Conflict Variables among Arable Crop Farmers in North Central Nigeria. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 30(1), 1-9
- Agbaegbu, Tobs (2011), "On Tenterhooks.; Newswatch, September 27.
- Akeredolu Oluwarotimi (2010), "Nigeria: Tackling the Challenges of Nationhood (2)," *The Guardian*, October 24.
- Aregbesola Isaac and Akinola Kehinde (2011), "Jos Crisis: Over 6,000 Persons Died, 350 Displaced in 2010," *Businessday*, March 1.
- Ayoade, J.A.A. (2014). The Sacred in the Service of the Secular: The Nigerian Case. In A.A.J. Ayoade, A.A. Adeoye, and O.J.B. Olatunde (eds.), *Nigeria: Descent into Anarchy and Collapse?* Ibadan: John Archers, 151-180.
- Businessday (2010), "Jos Crisis: 15 Jailed 10 Years Each," December 19.
- Ezea Samson (2011), "Federal Government Should Tackle Jos Crisis Adequately," *The Guardian*, February 26.
- Freund William (1986), "Theft and Social Protest among the Tin Miners of Northern Nigeria," in Donald Crummey (ed.), *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa*, Oxford: James Curney, pp. 49-63.
- Krause, J. (2017). Non-Violence and Civilian Agency in Communal War: Evidence from Jos, Nigeria. *African Affairs*, 116 (463), 261-283.
- Madueke Kingsley (2018), "Routing Ethnic Violence in a Divided City: Walking in the Footsteps of Armed Mobs in Jos, Nigeria", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 56(3):443-470
- Obateru Taye and Eyoboka Sam (2012), "10 Die in Jos, Suicide Bombing, Reprisals," *Vanguard*, February 27.
- Obateru, Taye (2013), "Langtang Massacre: Death Toll Rises to 70," *Vanguard*, July 3.
- Onuorah Madu and Abdulsalami Isa (2010), "We Know Culprits of Jos Crisis, Say Police," *The Guardian*, January 26.
- Oota, L. (2016). Echoes of Agatu Killings. *Saturday Sun*, February 4.
- Owuamanam, Jude (2011), "Jang Blames Power Struggle for Jos Crisis," *The Punch*, October 14.
- Plateau State Peace Building Agency (2018), Plateau State Road Map to Peace: PPBA Strategic Action Plan (2018-2022), Jos: Office of the Executive Governor
- Reno William (2004), "The Roots of Sectarian Violence and Its Cure," in Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *Crafting the New Nigeria: Confronting The Challenges*, London: Lynne Rienner, pp. 219-238.
- Sayne Aaron (2012), "Rethinking Nigeria's Indigene-Settler Conflicts", Special Report, United States Institute of Peace
- Solomon H. (2017). Theorizing Boko Haram: Understanding the Terrorist Threat. In James J. Hentz and Hussein Solomon (eds.) *Understanding Boko Haram: Terrorism and Insurgency in Africa*, London and New York: Routledge, 3-16.
- The Guardian (2010), "UN Urges Action against Jos Crisis Masterminds," *The Guardian*, December 28.
- The Nation (2010), "Small Arms Scourge," *The Nation*, October 14.
- Vanguard (2010), "Jos Blast: When We Struck, by Jos Terror Group," *Vanguard*, December 29.
- Vanguard (2012). "What If They Die?" *Vanguard*, July 10.
- Vanguard (2014), "7 UNI JOS Medical Students Die in Blast," *Vanguard*, May 22.



SPD
Nextier
Security . Peace . Development